



Arlington Residential Design Guidelines Study

Virtual Public Forum - June 30, 2020

Town of Arlington, Department of Planning and Community Development



Agenda

1. Presentation

- Introduction, Project Goals, Process, Timeline
- Review of Existing Conditions and Existing Zoning
- Review of Visual Preference Survey Results

2. Open Q&A about Presentation

3. Break-out Group Discussions and Group Polling

4. Open Q&A and Comments

5. Next Steps

Project Goals

The Town of Arlington would like to work with the community to create Residential Guidelines for one-family, two-family, and three-family residential projects in R0, R1, and R2 districts that:

- Address three sets of interests: the preferences of neighborhood residents; the desires of property owners to add onto or replace existing housing; and the general public interests of the Arlington community.
- Codify the balances between different needs in a clear and understandable way - community and individual, aesthetics and market needs, control and flexibility.
- Recommend an approval process that ensures the balance is embodied in the built environment as new structures are built.

Process

TASK 1

Existing Conditions Analysis

Spring 2020

- Neighborhood boundaries and inventory
- Identification of Areas of Change

TASK 2

Community Conversations

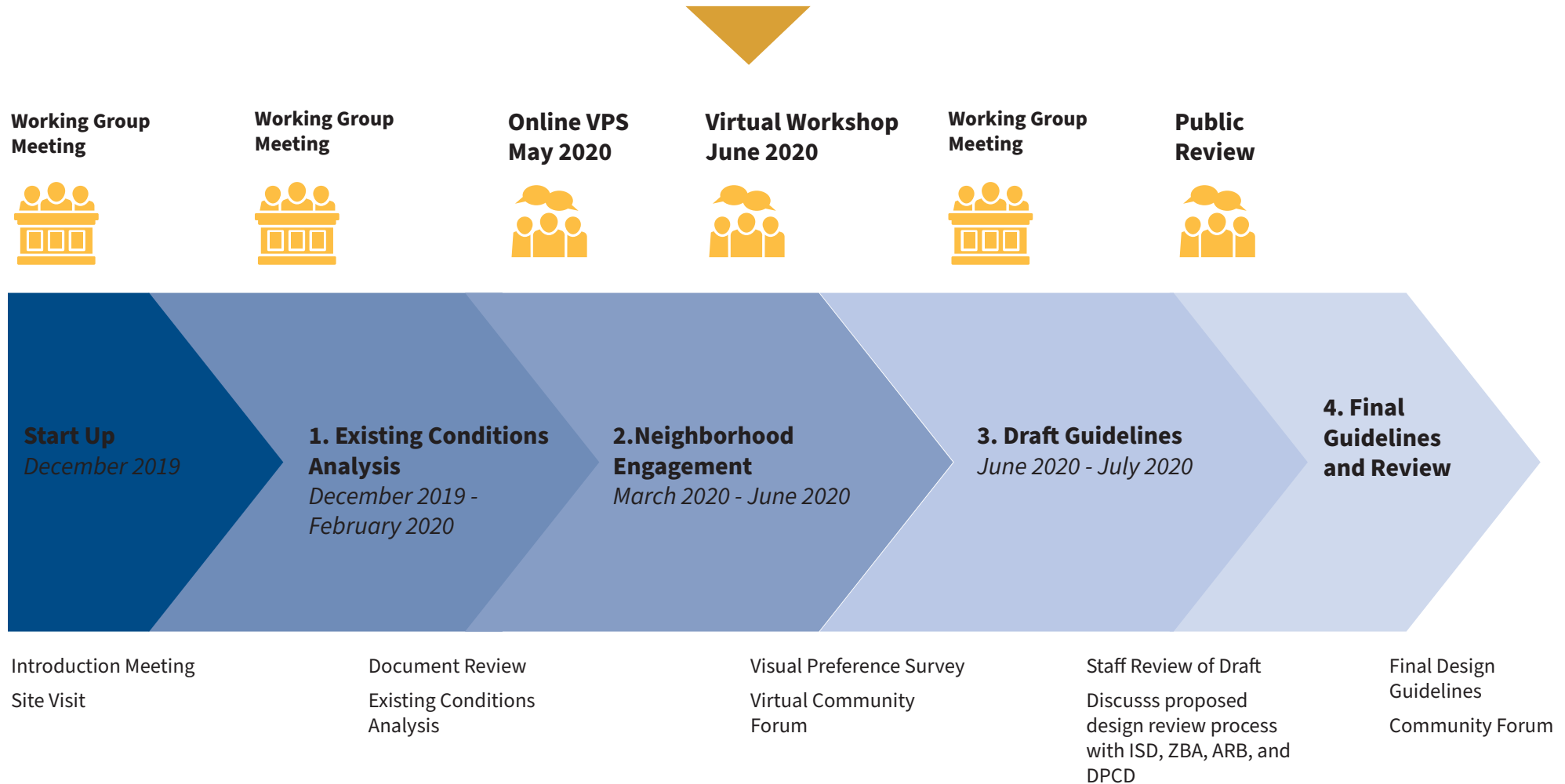
- Visual Preference Survey: *(May 2020)* define design elements that are most critical to sense of place
- Virtual Online Forum: *(June 2020)* explore different scenarios for design guidelines

TASK 3 & 4

Preparation of Draft and Final Guidelines

- Draft Design Guidelines *(July - August 2020)*
- Working Group and Public Review of Draft Guidelines *(October 2020)*
- Final Design Guidelines *(October 2020)*

Process





Existing Conditions Analysis Overview

Existing Conditions Analysis - Overview

Through the analysis, the team worked to understand:

- Key design issues and patterns that impact the identity of a neighborhood
- Design factors that differentiate Arlington's single-family and two-family neighborhoods
- Current permitting process

Existing Conditions - Key Design Issues

1. Additions that do not fit the design context of the existing house and neighborhood
2. New Construction that is not in scale with the neighborhood
3. Parking that dominates the principal façade

*Note that non-Arlington examples were used to protect the privacy of Arlington residents

1. Additions that do not fit the design context of the existing house and neighborhood



Addition overtakes original house and effectively create three-story houses; Medford, MA.
Source: Google Streetview.

2. New Construction that is not in scale with the neighborhood



Large home with many elements; Lexington, MA. Source: Google Streetview.

3. Parking that dominates the principal façade



Attached, front-facing garage dominates the house; Medford, MA. *Source: Google Streetview.*

What makes up a neighborhood's identity?

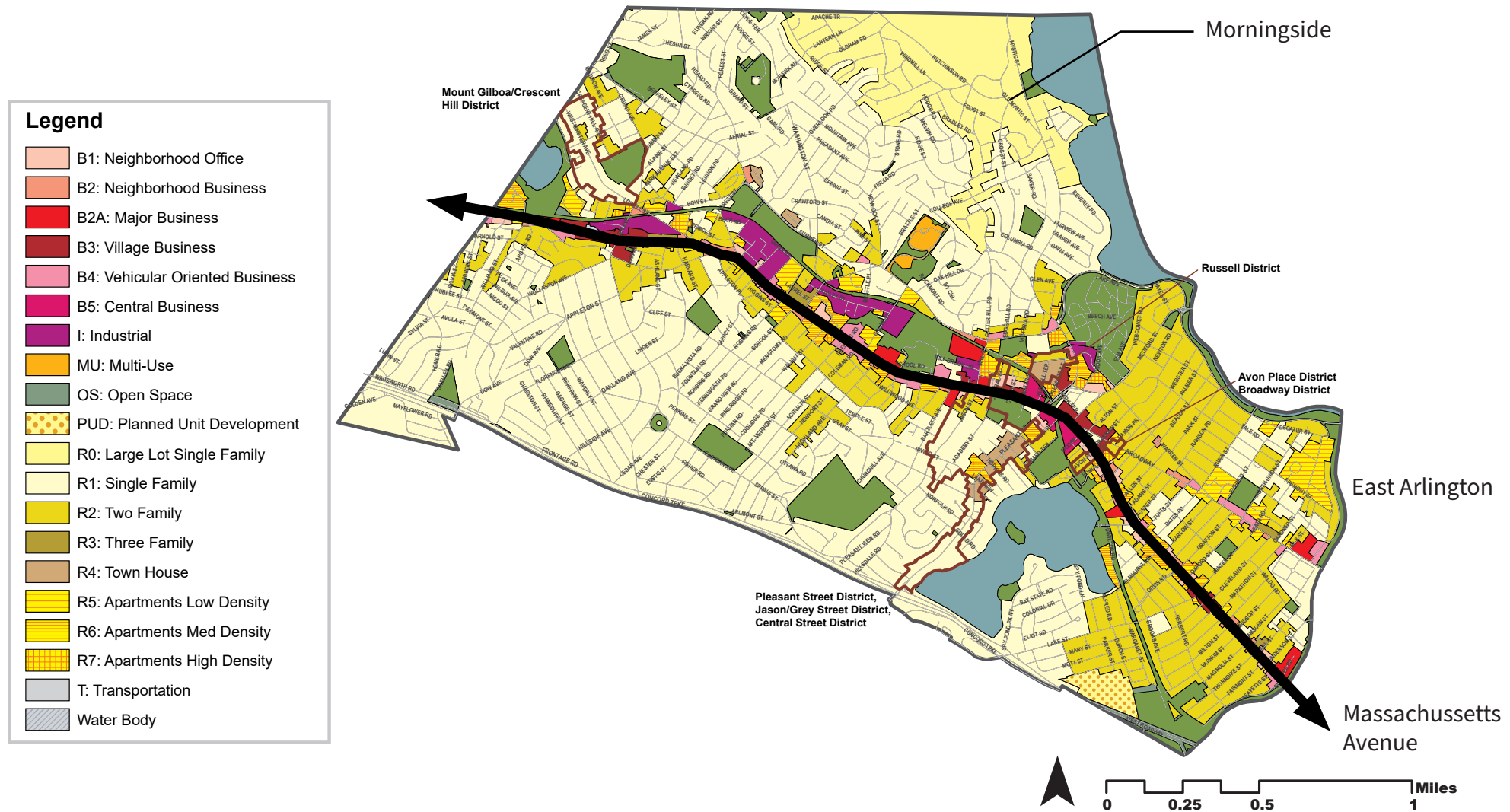
A 'sense of place' is the relationship between people and place and includes the physical characteristics of a neighborhood.

Elements that help to distinguish different neighborhoods include:

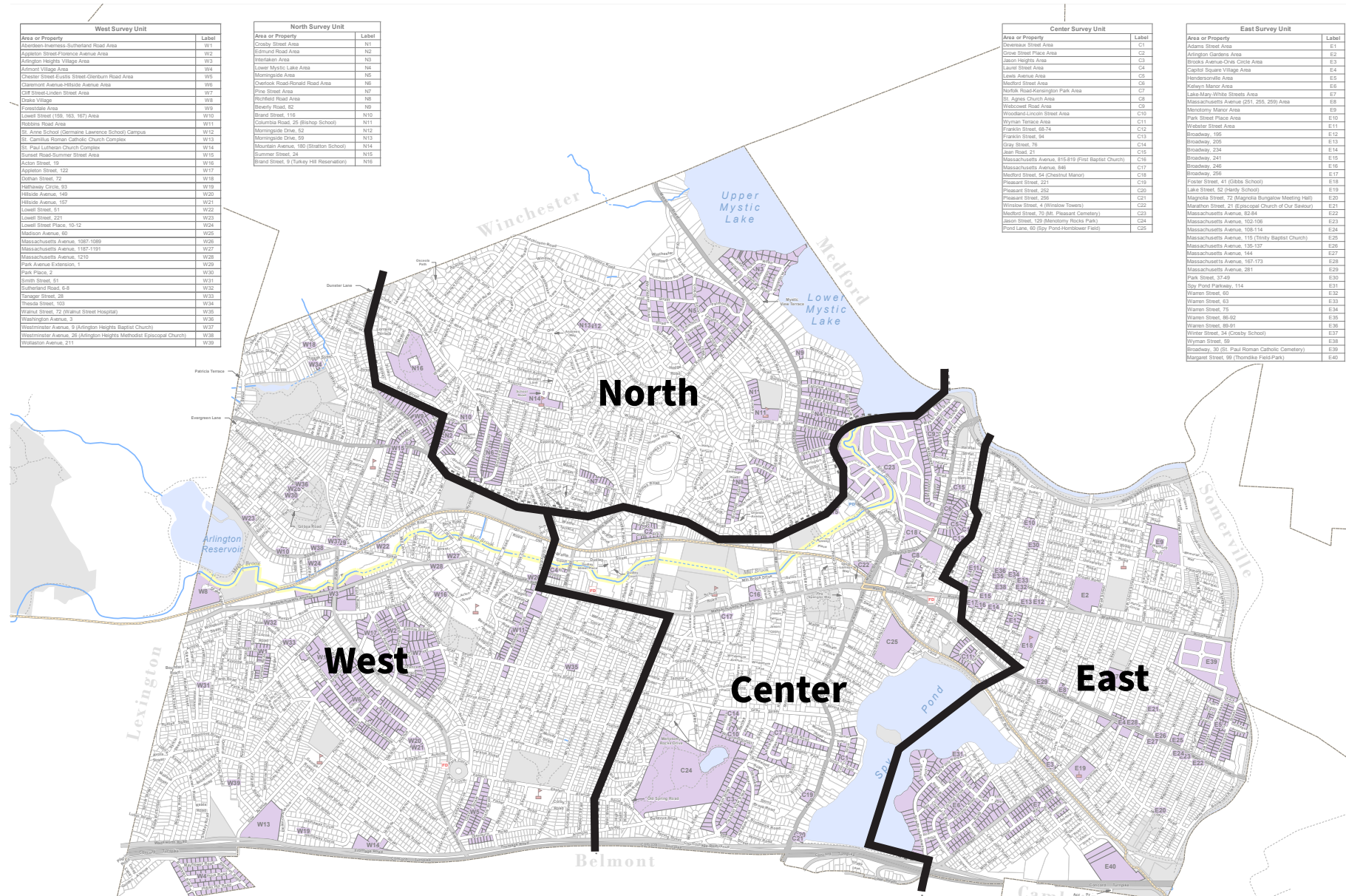
- History of development - Streetcar suburb vs. post-war suburb.
Arlington's population nearly doubled in the 1920s and saw other waves of development after WWII in the 1950s.
- Landmarks and open spaces
- Street layout and lot size
- Age, style, historic districts
- Massing, density, height

Town Map - Zoning Districts

Most of Arlington is zoned R1. The northern portion of Arlington in Morningside is zoned R0 in many areas. East Arlington and sections of Mass Ave are zoned R2.



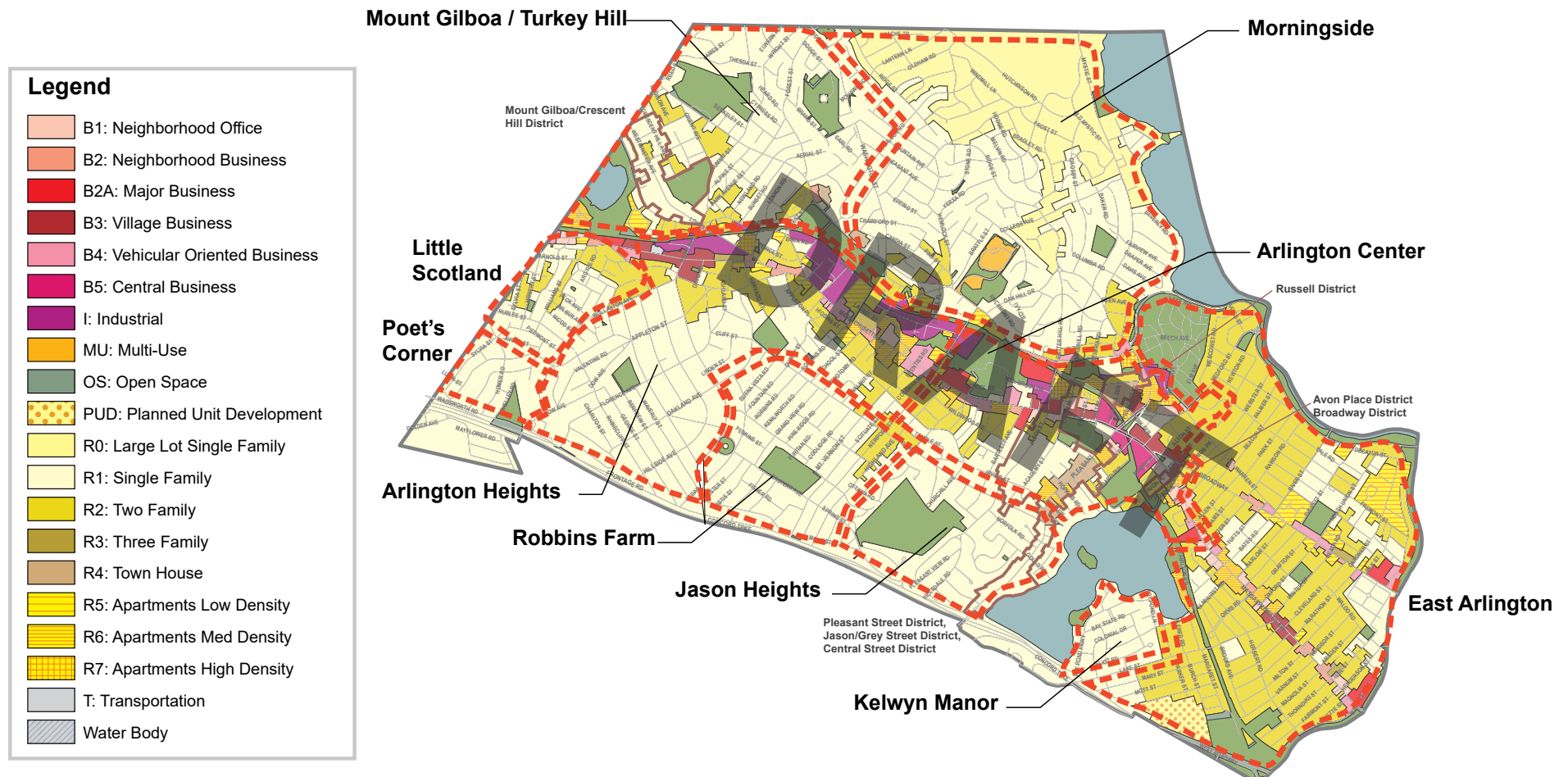
Town Map - Historic Survey Districts



Source: Arlington Planning and Community Development Department, Arlington Master Plan

Neighborhood “Fuzzy Boundary” Map

This ‘fuzzy boundary’ map was drafted by synthesizing information from unofficial mental maps, zoning, key open spaces, and maps of Assessor’s Data such as lot size, age, FAR, and style. Though neighborhoods differ, they are mostly zoned as R1.



Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - Year Built

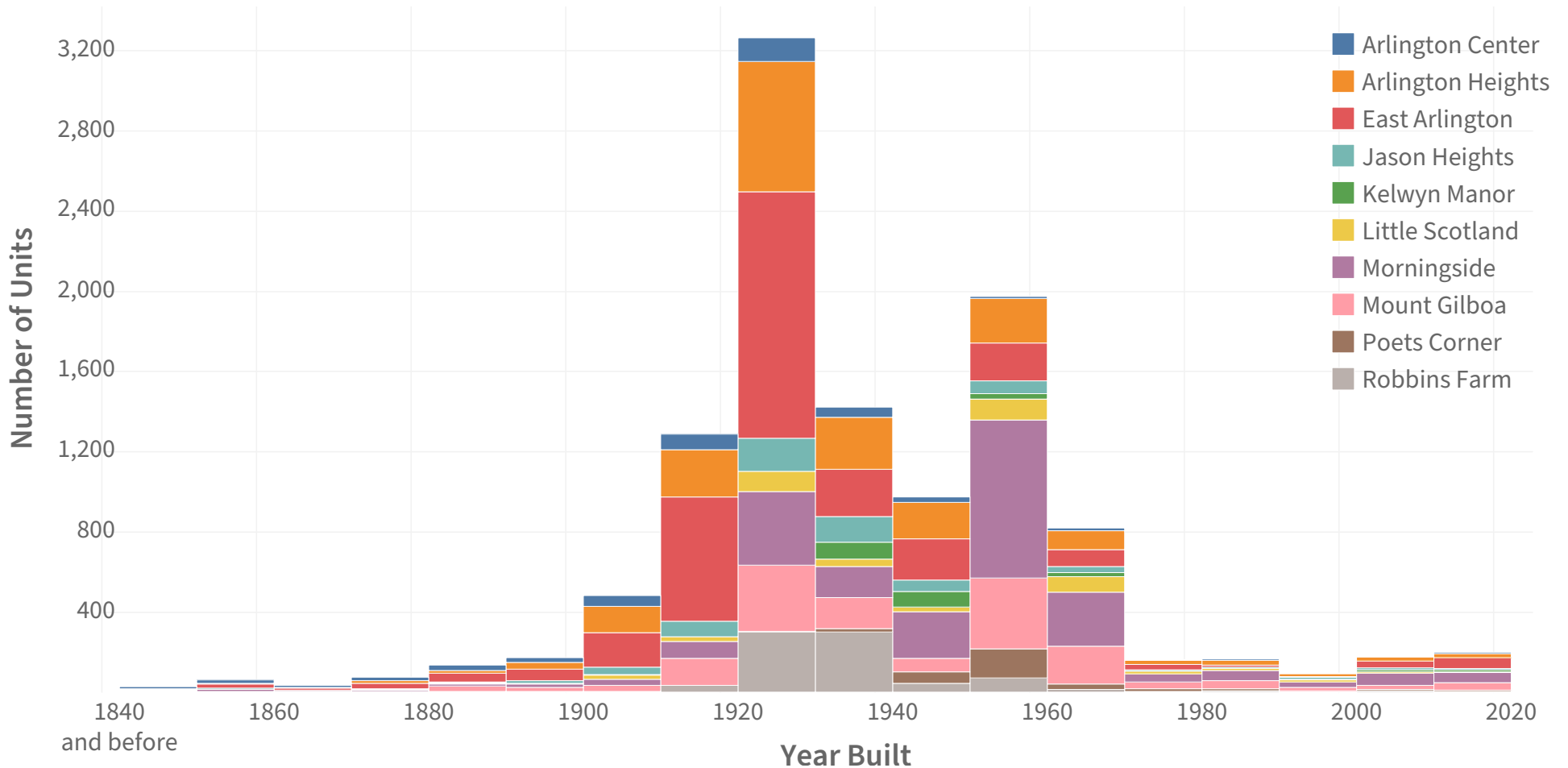
Arlington has seen different waves of construction which affects the dominant style of different areas.



Source: Assessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - Year Built

Arlington has seen different waves of construction which affects the dominant style of different areas.



Residential - Density, Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

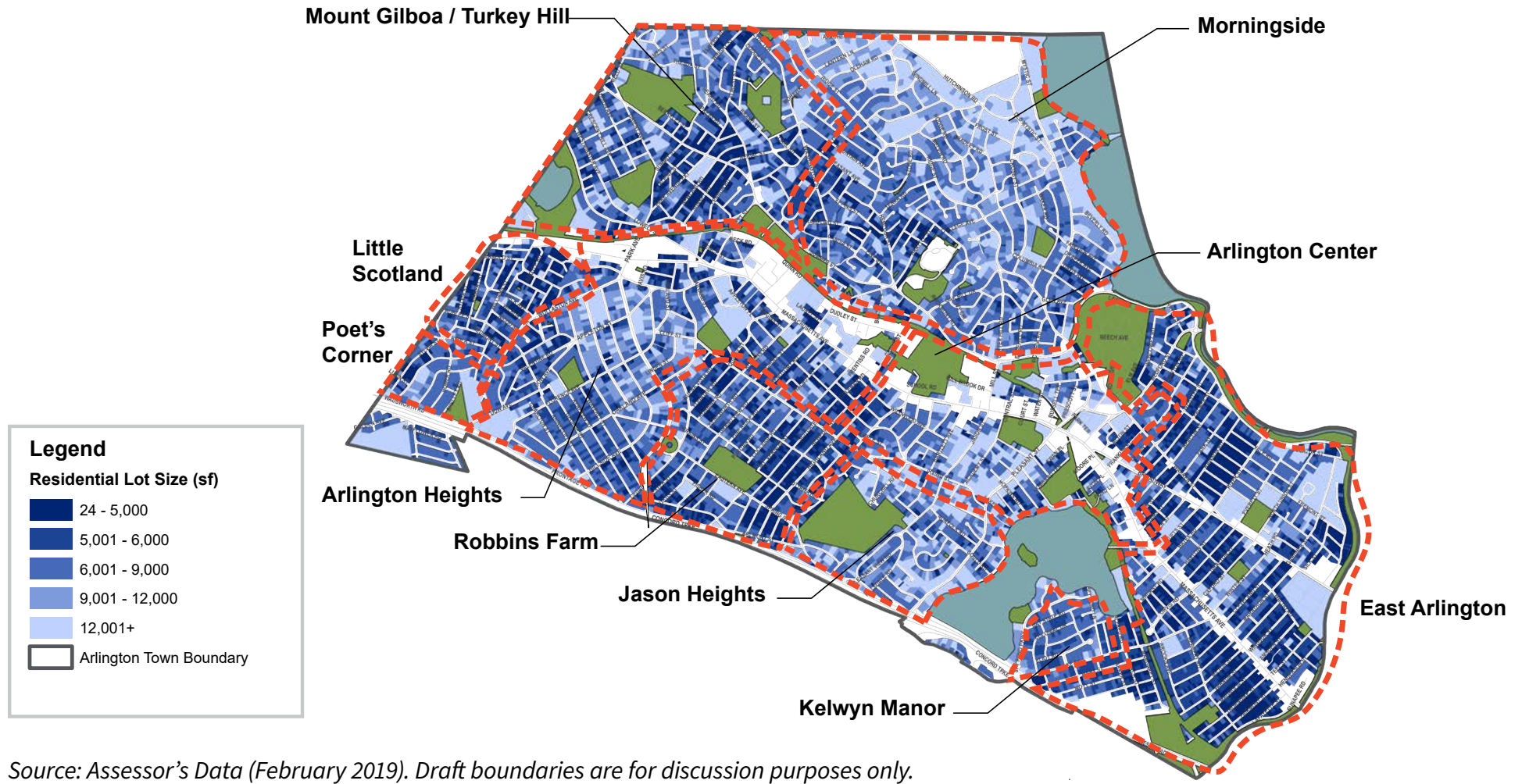
Floor Area Ratio is calculated by dividing the Gross Floor Area by the Lot Size. East Arlington is dense due to smaller lot sizes and all two-family homes. Most of Mass Ave. is higher density due to higher residential zoning districts and business zoning districts.



Source: Assessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

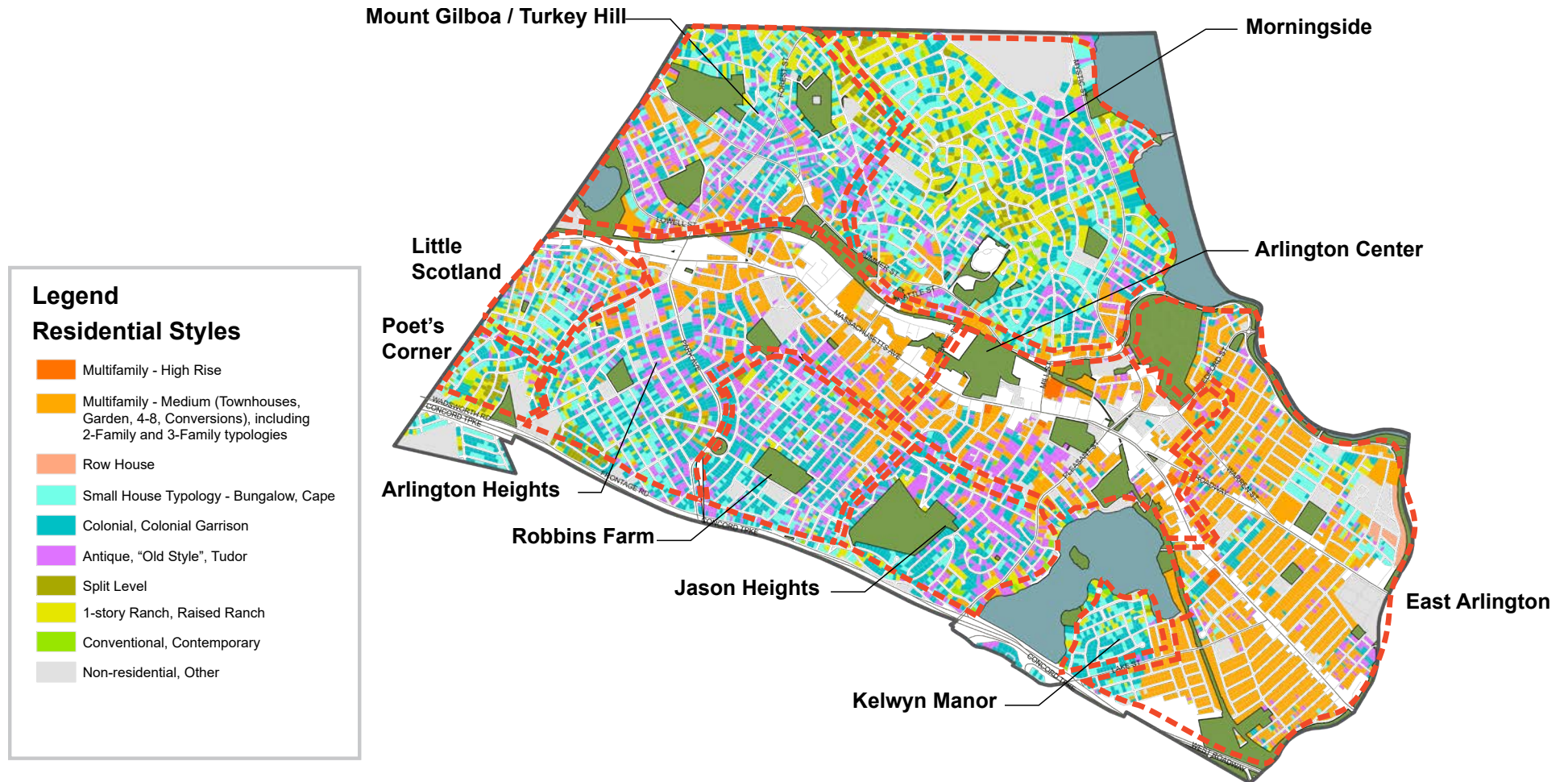
Residential - Lot Size

Residential Lot Sizes vary across Arlington and speak to the type of street layout of each neighborhood. Generally, neighborhoods developed as street car suburbs in the early 20th century are more compact.



Residential - Style

Understanding the elements of different residential styles is an important first step to developing tailored guidelines.



Source: Assessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Assessor Data Classification



Antique/Mixed Old/Old Style



Colonial



Colonial (Dutch)



Bungalow



Cape



Ranch

Residential Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Assessor Data Classification



Raised Ranch



Colonial (Contemporary)



Colonial (Contemporary)

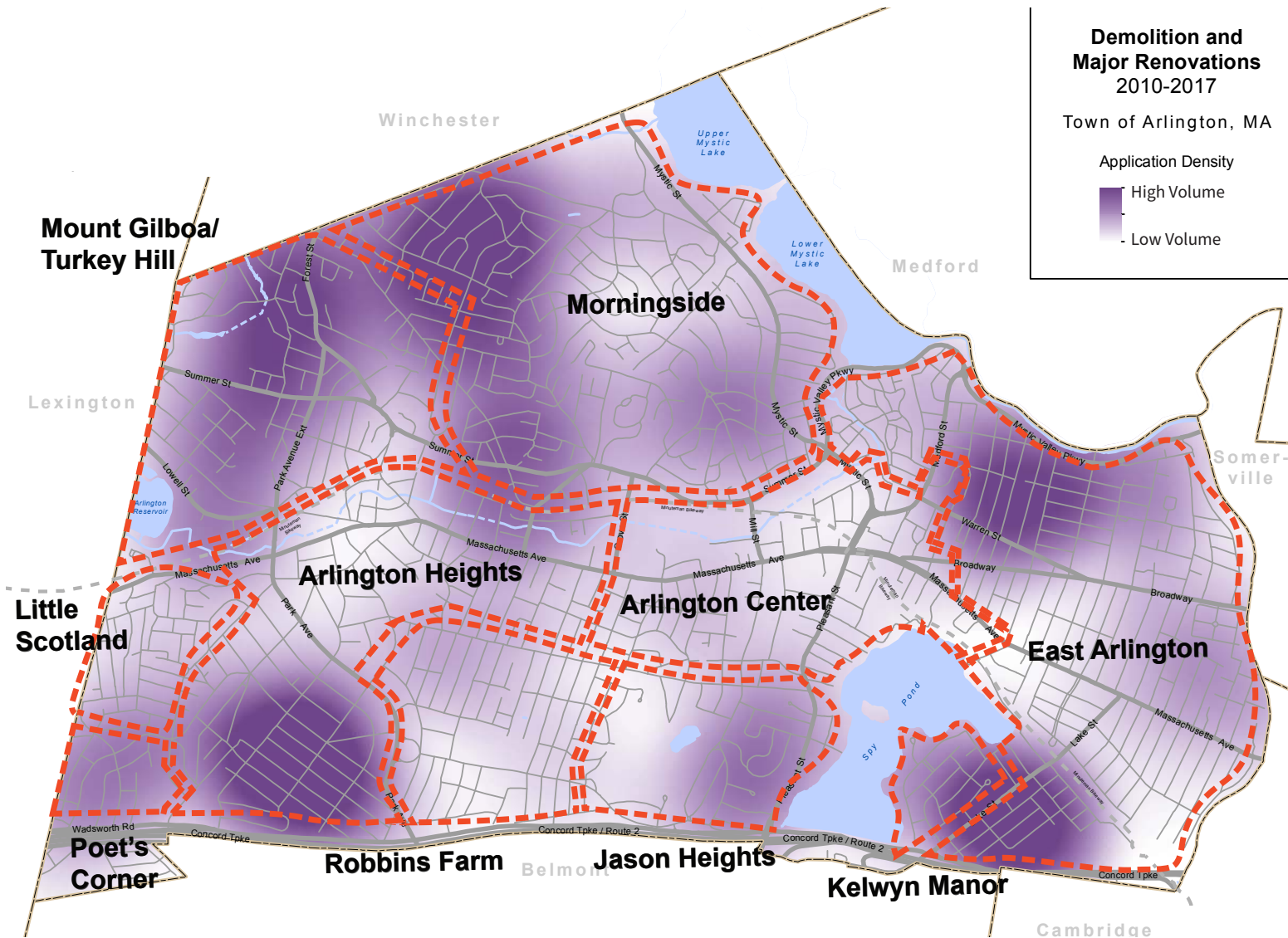


Two-Family, Stacked



Two-Family, Townhouse/Duplex

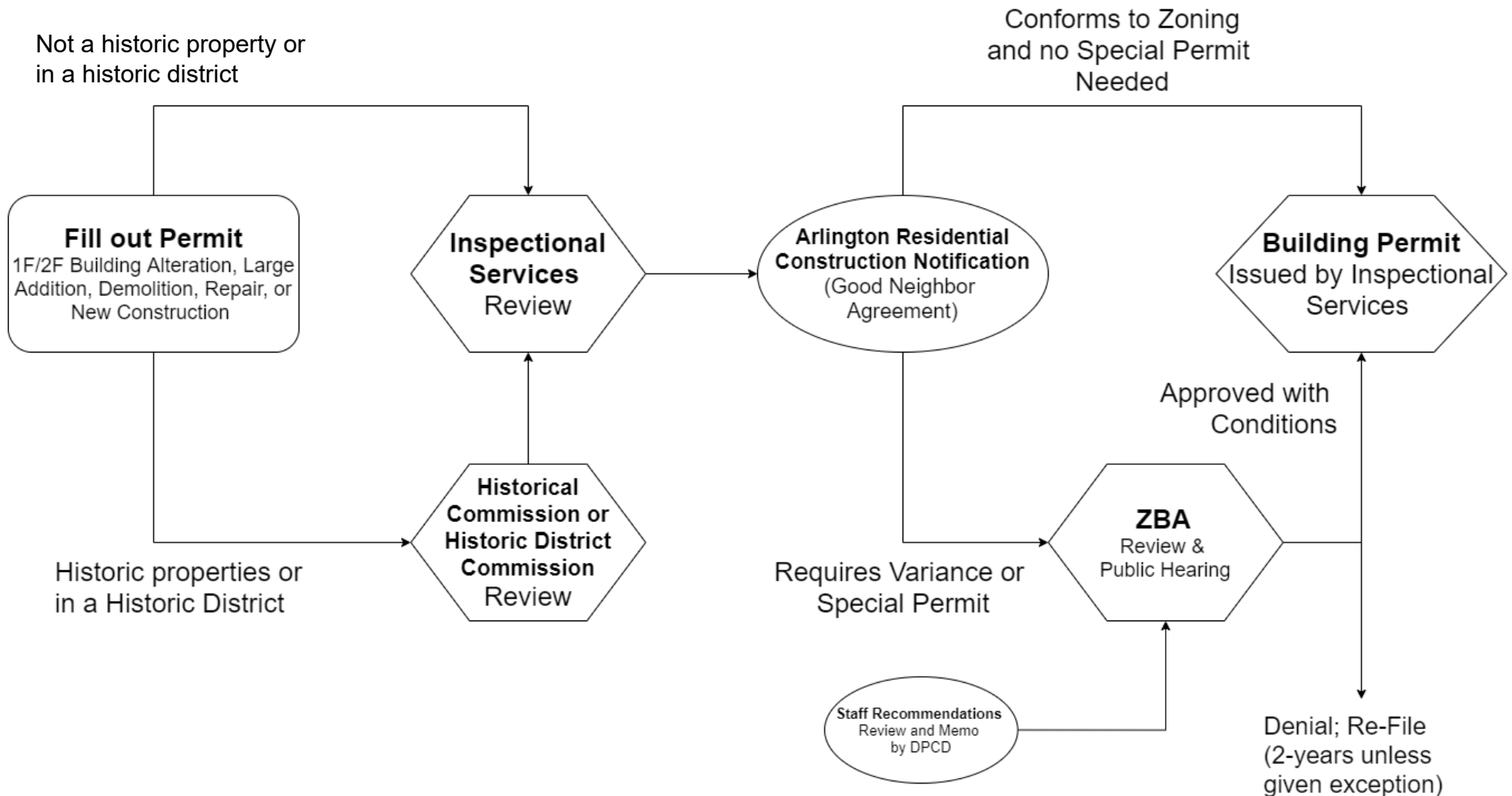
Permitting Heat Map



Source: Arlington Planning and Community Development Department

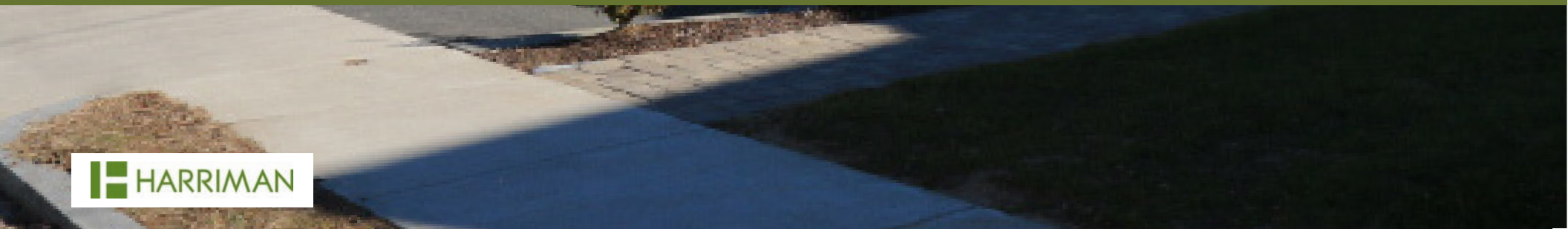
Development Approval Process

1. Where should a 'Design Review' fit into the process?
2. How should it be triggered?





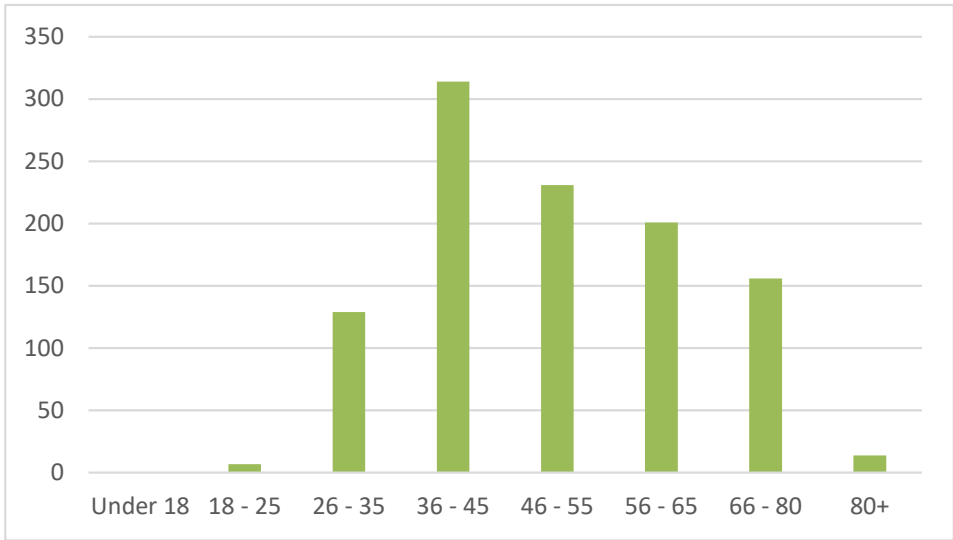
Visual Preference Survey Results Summary



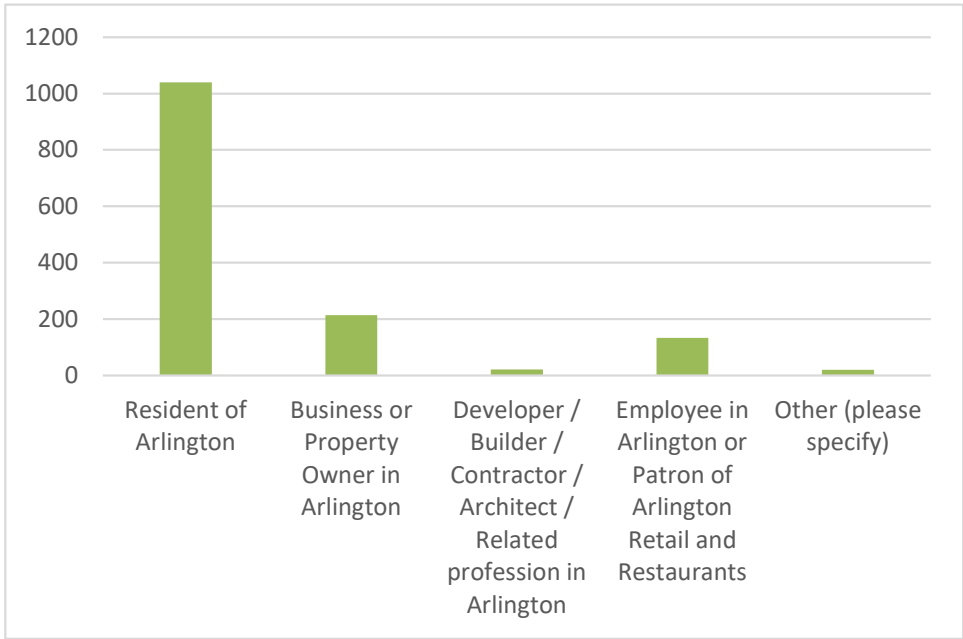
Visual Preference Survey - Respondents

The surey was open between May 6, 2020 and June 8, 2020.
A total of 1,071 responses were received.

1. Please select your age group:



2. Please select your association(s) with the Town of Arlington:



What do you like about Arlington's residential neighborhoods?

Emergent themes from the 884 responses include:

- Walkable, friendly neighborhoods that are convenient to many amenities and good for families.
- Balance between density and quietness.
- Variety of neighborhoods and architectural character that reflect Arlington's history.
- Green spaces, yards, and trees.

Sample Responses:

"The walkability, how neighbors in my neighborhood often hang out in their front yards and porches, the tree canopy, the variety of housing styles especially older homes."

"Walkability. Even the densest sections of East Arlington maintain a feeling of openness that you simply do not get if you walk through Somerville or Cambridge. This is what I like most about Arlington-- a happy medium between the dense city and the suburban Lexington."

What are your thoughts on more recently built or renovated houses (from 2000 to today) in Arlington's residential neighborhoods?

Emergent themes from the 904 responses include:

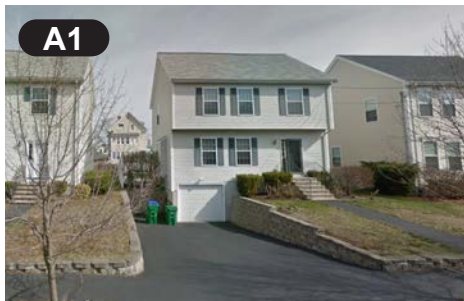
- Inappropriate scale of many of the new houses relative to parcel and surrounding neighborhood context.
- Many new houses feel generic, boxy, oversized, and priced higher.
- Sensitive renovations were preferred.
- A sizable minority felt neutral or positive towards recent constructions.

Sample Responses:

"Renovations are usually attractive, but new construction is often bland and lacks character compared to older houses."

"Some are well designed, fit well with the neighborhood, respect neighbors rights and property, and are improvements to the neighborhood. However, a substantial number are completely out-of-place/character with respect to scale and massing, intrude significantly on neighbor's property with respect to loss of sunlight (shading), loss of privacy, and loss of sightlines/visual impairment..."

Single-Family Residential



Google Streetview



Zillow, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage



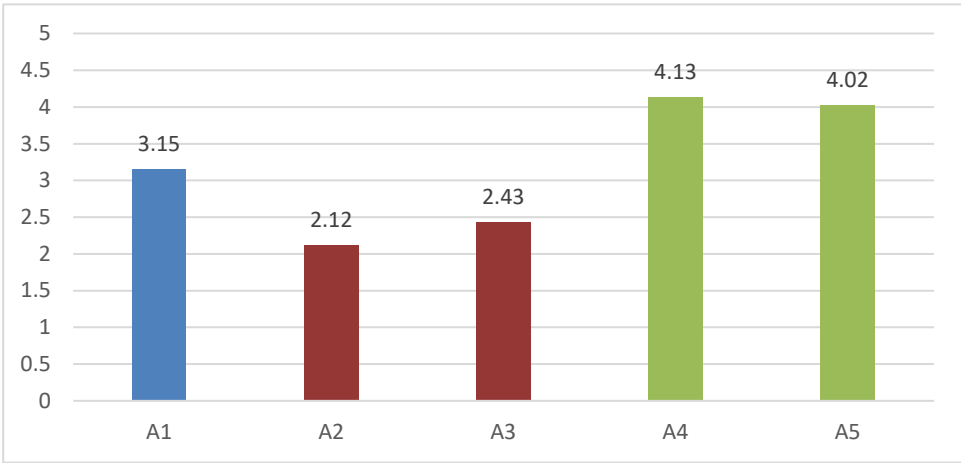
Codwell Banker Residential Brokerage



Zillow, Compass



Compass



Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

Two-Family Residential



Google Streetview



Redfin, MLS Property Information Network, Inc



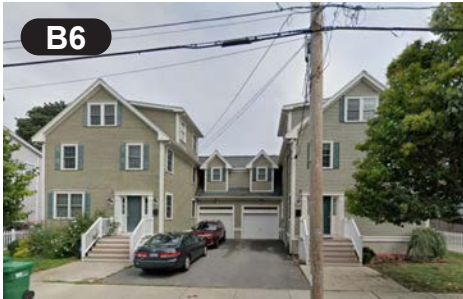
Zillow, Eastern Massachusetts Realty Group



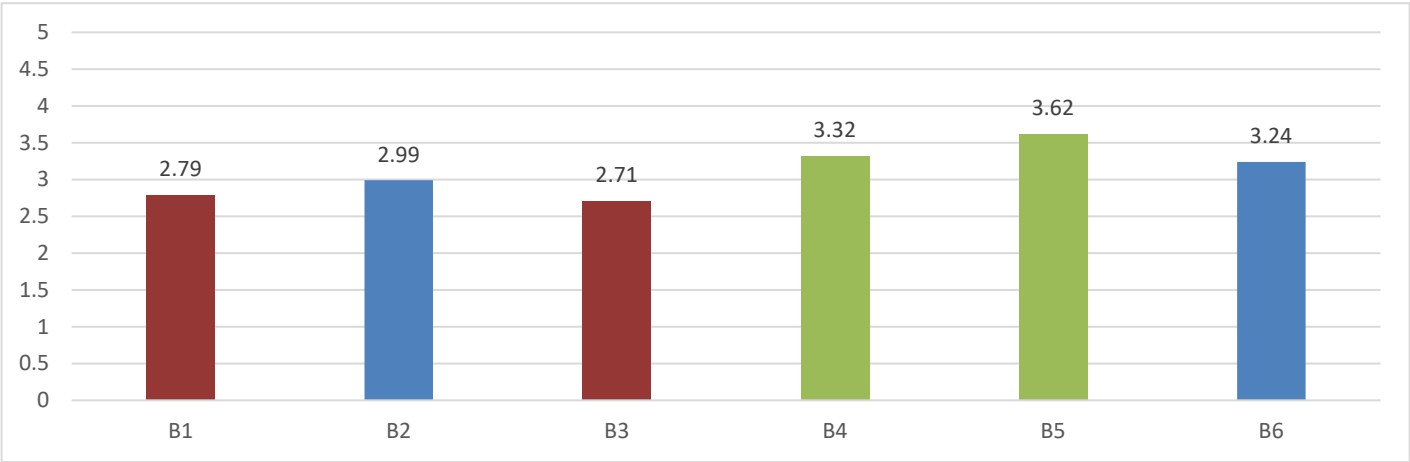
Google Streetview



Google Streetview

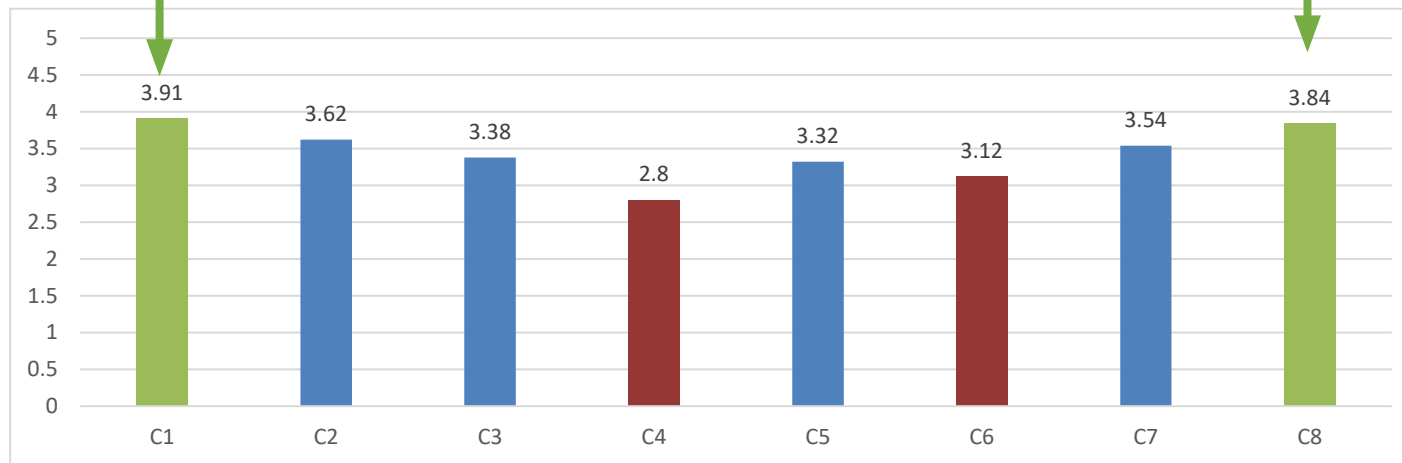


Google Streetview

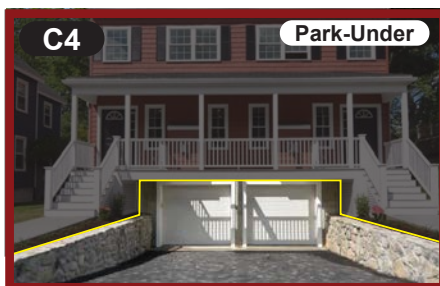


Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

Parking Strategies - Best and Worst Ranked



Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating



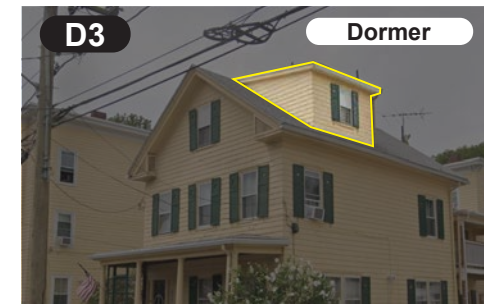
Additions: Dormers, Enclosed Porch



Google Streetview



Google Streetview



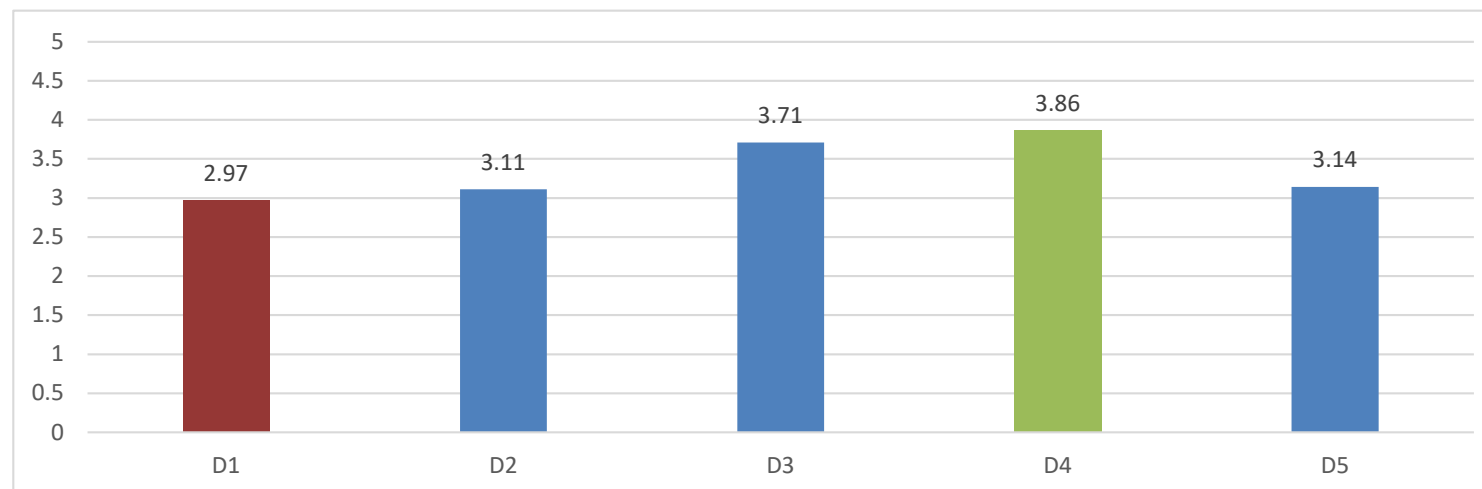
Google Streetview



Google Streetview

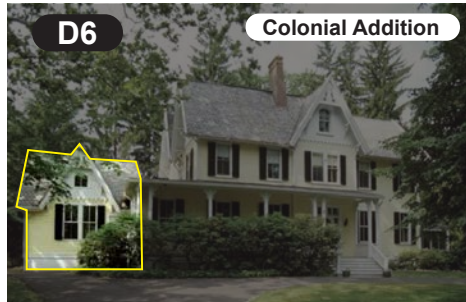


Google Streetview



Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

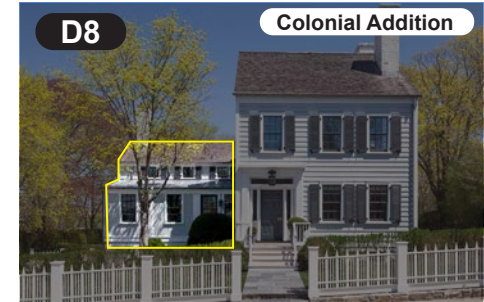
Additions: Side, Rear



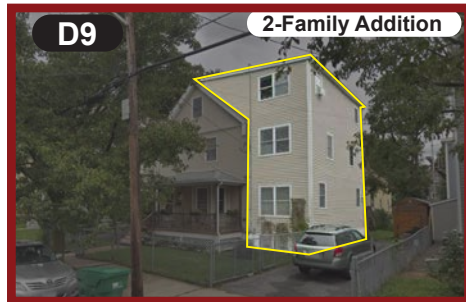
Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



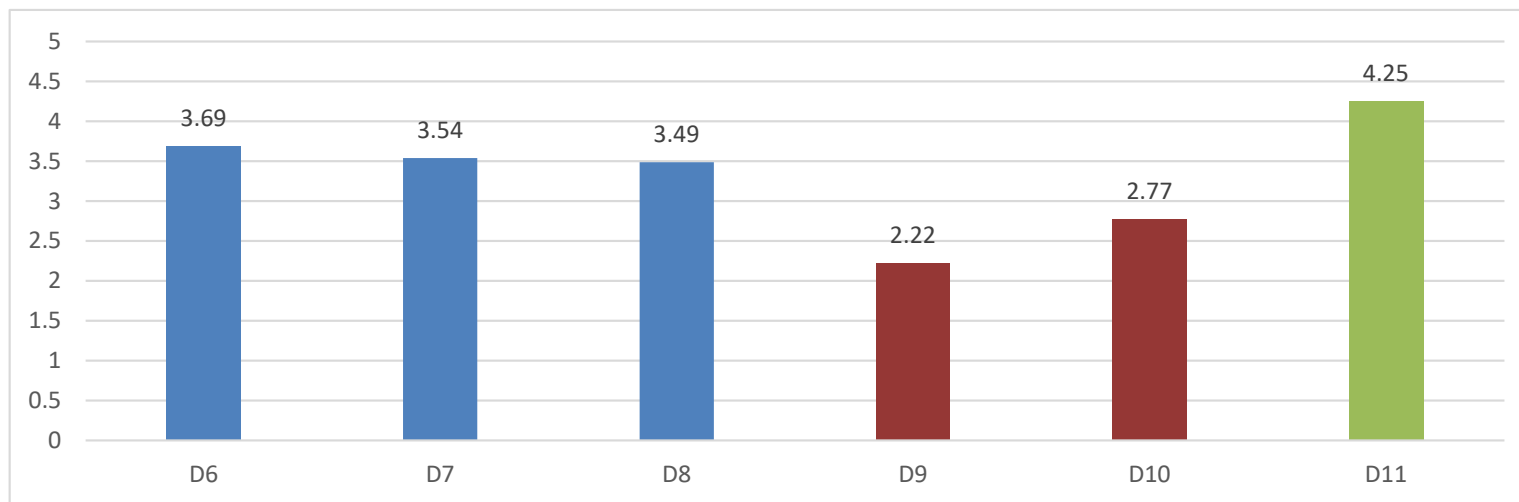
Google Streetview



Angela DiRusso of William Raveis R.E. & Home Services



Keith Robertson, Crismatec

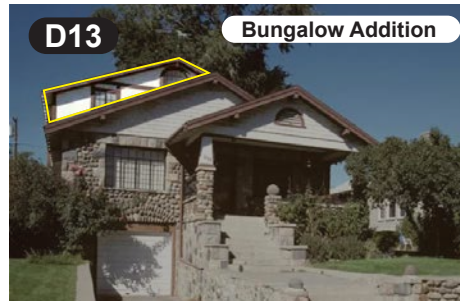


Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

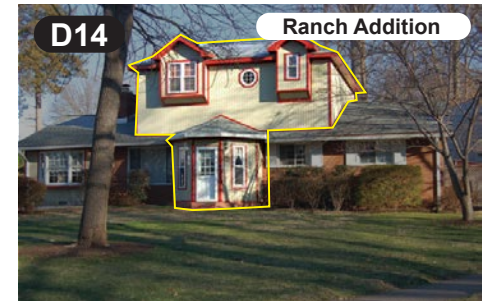
Additions: Vertical



Old House Journal, Additions 101



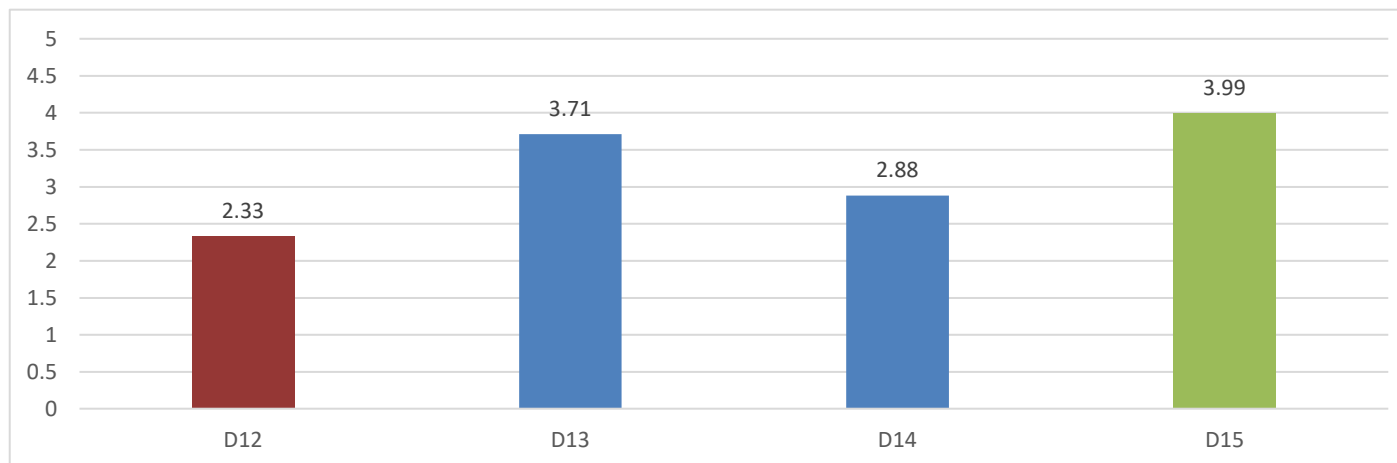
Old House Online, Gordon Bock



Old House Journal, Additions 101



Metzler Home Builders



Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

Open Answer Questions from Survey

- While the focus of the design guidelines will be on the design of the building itself, do you have any thoughts about landscaping?
- Now that you've taken the visual preference survey, what do you hope the Residential Design Guidelines will accomplish?
- What concerns or reservations do you have about the Residential Design Guidelines?
- Finally, what questions do you have about the Residential Design Guidelines?

Visual Preference Survey - Key Takeaways

- Respondents **love Arlington** because of its balance between urban convenience and the community feel of a quieter, smaller town.
- Respondents had **concerns about recent developments**, noting how many new homes were boxy and felt too large, relative to the lot and neighborhood.
- While some **single-family examples** were well-received, none of the **two-family examples** were especially well-received.
- **Parking strategies** that de-emphasized the garage and car were well-received. Garages that dominated the façade were not well-received.
- **Additions and renovations** that looked as if they were originally built as part of the house were successful while over-sized additions and dormers were not.
- **Overall**, respondents hope the guidelines will be clear and enforceable. They hope that it will promote quality designs that fit well in the neighborhood and provide enough flexibility to not overly restrict development.

Open Q&A

- Please “Raise Hand” to ask your question.
- The facilitator will call your name and unmute you when it’s your turn.
- Participants on the phone will be unmuted at a certain point and have a chance to ask questions.

Desktop

Providing nonverbal feedback during meetings (participants)

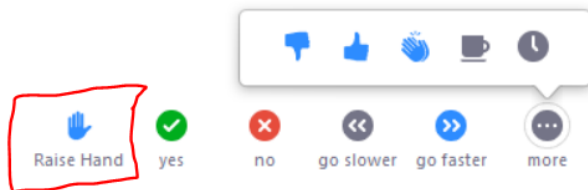
To provide nonverbal feedback to the host of the meeting:

1. Join a Zoom meeting as a participant.
2. Click the **Participants** button.



3. Click one of the icons to provide feedback to the host. Click the icon again to remove it.

Note: You can only have one icon active at a time.



IOS/Android

Providing Nonverbal Feedback During Meetings (Attendees)

To provide nonverbal feedback to the host of the meeting:

1. Join a Zoom meeting as a participant.
2. Click **More**.



3. Click one of the icons to provide feedback to the host. Click the icon again to remove it.

Note: You can only have one icon active at a time.

- raise hand



Workshop Facilitated Breakout Groups

Different Approaches to Guidelines



Different Approaches to Design Guidelines



The appearance of Attached Garages should be minimized. The attached garage should not dominate the principal façade.

Ground-level and park-under, attached garages should be set back from the principal façade to minimize their visual impact.

Ground-level and park-under, attached garages must be set back at least 8 ft from the principal façade to minimize their visual impact.



**General
Urban Design
Principles**

**Prescriptive
Dimensional
Limits**

Guidelines - Attached Garages

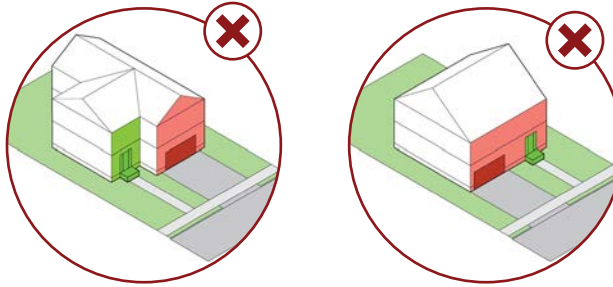
Option 1



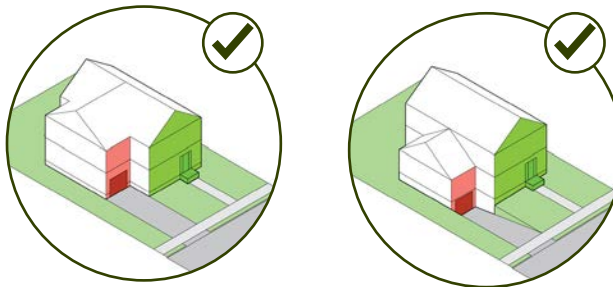
The appearance of Attached Garages should be minimized. The attached garage should not dominate the principal façade.

Specific Recommendations are for illustrative purposes only.

Option 2

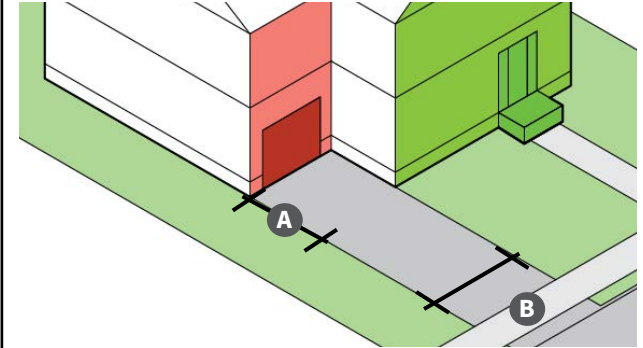


The appearance of Attached Garages should be minimized. Attached Garage should not be flush with the principal façade or extend past the principal façade.



Ground-level and park-under, attached garages should be set back from the principal façade to minimize their visual impact.

Option 3



- A** Front-facing garage setback from primary façade: 8 ft
- B** Single-car garage doors are preferred. Double-car garages should use two single-car doors instead of one double-wide garaged door. Driveways should taper and not be wider than 12 ft at the point of intersection with the sidewalk.

Guidelines - Shed Dormers

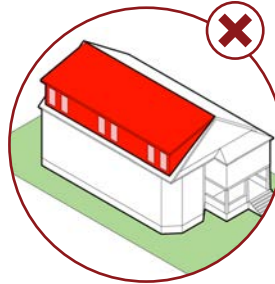
Option 1



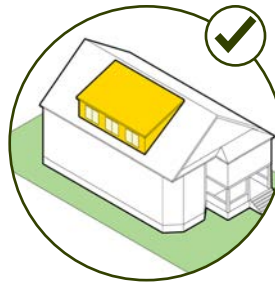
Shed dormer additions should be designed to be consistent in scale and style with the existing building and neighborhood. The dormer should be sized appropriately.

Specific Recommendations are for illustrative purposes only.

Option 2

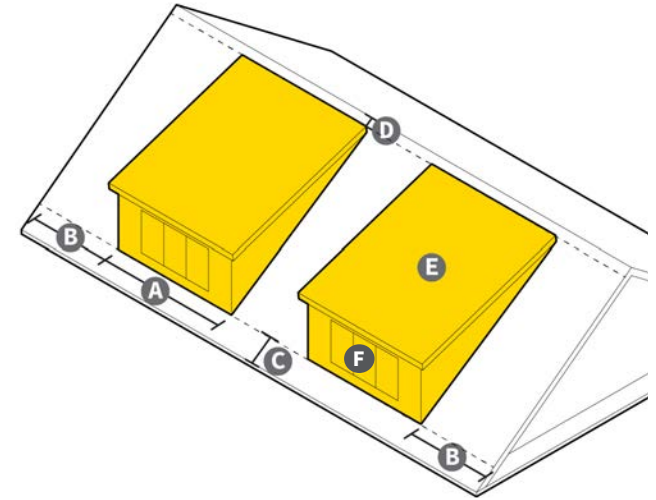


The dormer should not overpower the primary roof and create the appearance of an additional story.



The total width of the dormer(s) should not exceed 50% of the eave length of the roof below and be set back appropriately from the top ridge and edges of the roof. Large shed dormers are encouraged to be broken up into multiple dormers. A majority of the dormer façade should be glazed.

Option 3



- A** Total dormer width should not exceed 50% of the eave length of the roof below.
- B** Side wall setback: 3 ft
- C** Front/Rear wall setback: 3 ft
- D** Ridge setback: 1 ft
- E** Shed roof slope (min): 4:12, 18.4°
- F** Glazed width of dormer percentage (min): 75% of total dormer width

Guidelines - Additions, Small House Typology

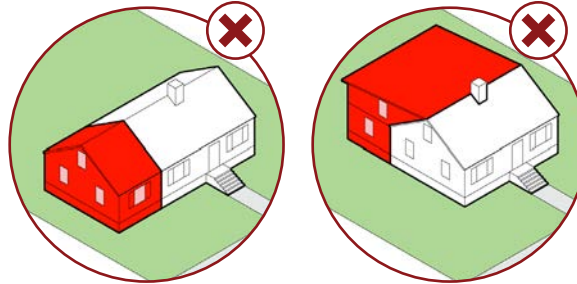
Option 1



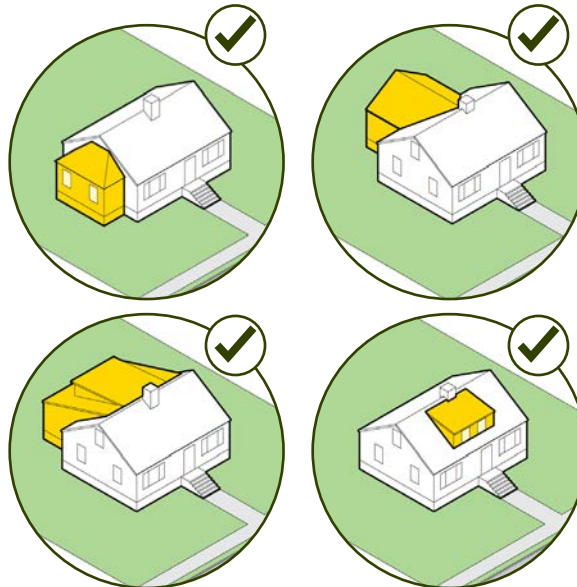
- A Cape Cod house is a low, broad, single-story frame building with a moderately steep pitched gabled roof, a large central chimney, and very little ornamentation.
- Additions should match the scale, material, window pattern, and roof style of the existing house.
- Additions should not significantly alter the visual alignment, rhythm, and spacing of the street.

Specific Recommendations are for illustrative purposes only.

Option 2

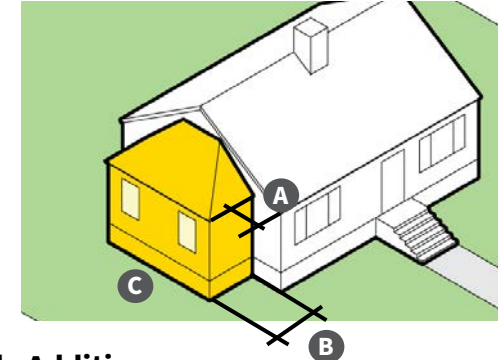


Additions should be designed to be smaller in scale to the existing Cape-styled house.



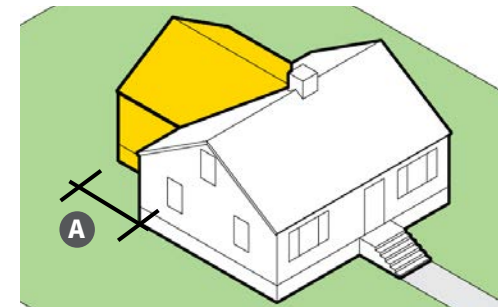
Additions should match the scale, material, window pattern, and roof style of the existing house. Rear additions and dormers are preferred.

Option 3



Side Addition

- A** Set back from primary façade: 3 ft
- B** Front width of addition: 25% of primary façade
- C** Side width of addition: 75% of side façade



Rear Addition

- A** Visual impact of addition should be minimized. Length of rear addition should not exceed width of existing structure. Additions should remain 1 1/2 story.

Guidelines - New Two-Family Duplex

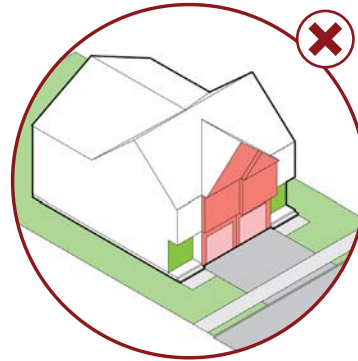
Option 1



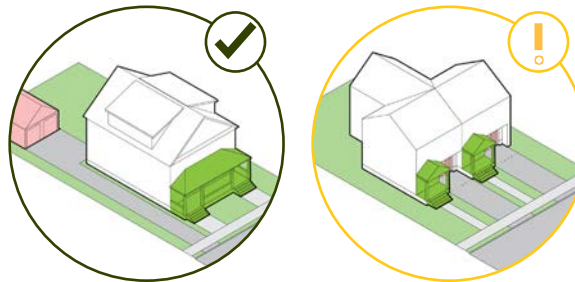
- The massing of new two-family duplexes should be designed to be in context with the existing buildings on the street.
- Wide duplexes should be broken up visually to match the rhythm of building spacing.
- Front-facing attached garages should not dominate the primary façade.

Specific Recommendations are for illustrative purposes only.

Option 2



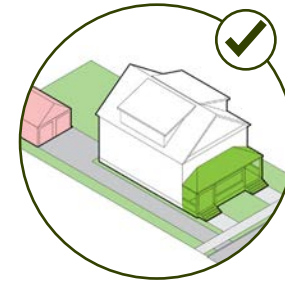
Front-facing attached garages are discouraged. The massing of new two-family duplexes should be designed to be in context with the existing buildings on the street.



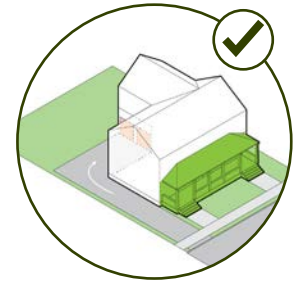
Duplexes are encouraged to use rear or side garages and not locate garages on the primary façade, whenever feasible.

Front-facing attached garages should be set back from the primary façade. Spacious front porches are encouraged. Front-facing garages should incorporate transparency, materials, and details (e.g., hardware such as hinges) to create a welcoming design.

Option 3



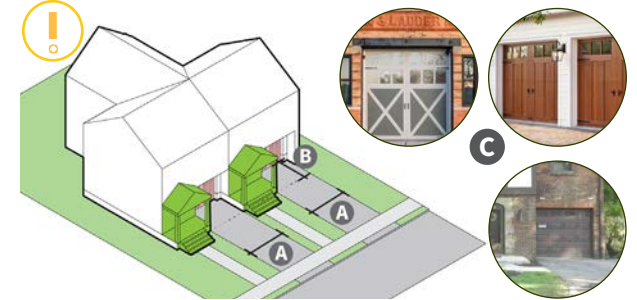
Rear Garage



Side Garage

Duplex - No front-facing attached garage

Duplexes are encouraged to not locate garages on the primary façade, whenever feasible.



Duplex - Front-facing attached garage

Duplexes with front-facing attached garages must meet the following:

- A** Width of garage (max): 50% of primary façade
- B** Garage setback from primary façade and/or entrance elements (min): 8 ft
- C** Front-facing garages should incorporate transparency, materials, and details (e.g., hardware such as hinges) to create a welcoming design.

Guidelines - Simple Alternatives and Improvements

Front-facing garage door can be replaced or repainted to be more welcoming.



Before



After



Before



After

Specific Recommendations are for illustrative purposes only.

Breakout Group Discussion - Instructions

Step 1

Click **Join Breakout Room**.

You have been assigned to Breakout Room:

Breakout Room 2

Join Breakout Room

- You will be randomly assigned a breakout room.
- Through Zoom, you should see a pop-up window inviting you to join a breakout room.
- If you would prefer not to join the group, please feel free to stay in the main presentation.

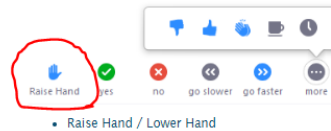
Step 2

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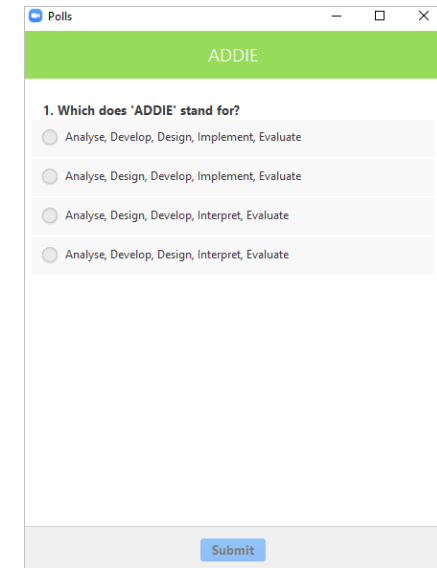
Note: You can only have one icon active at a time.



- The facilitator will show the group five sample guidelines.
- Each guideline has three options, ranging from general principles to more prescriptive.
- Raise hand to speak. Discuss which approach is most appropriate for each design element.

**Please note that the guidelines are still under development, so do not focus on the specifics, such as dimensions. You are welcome to comment on the particulars if there is time after the main discussion.*

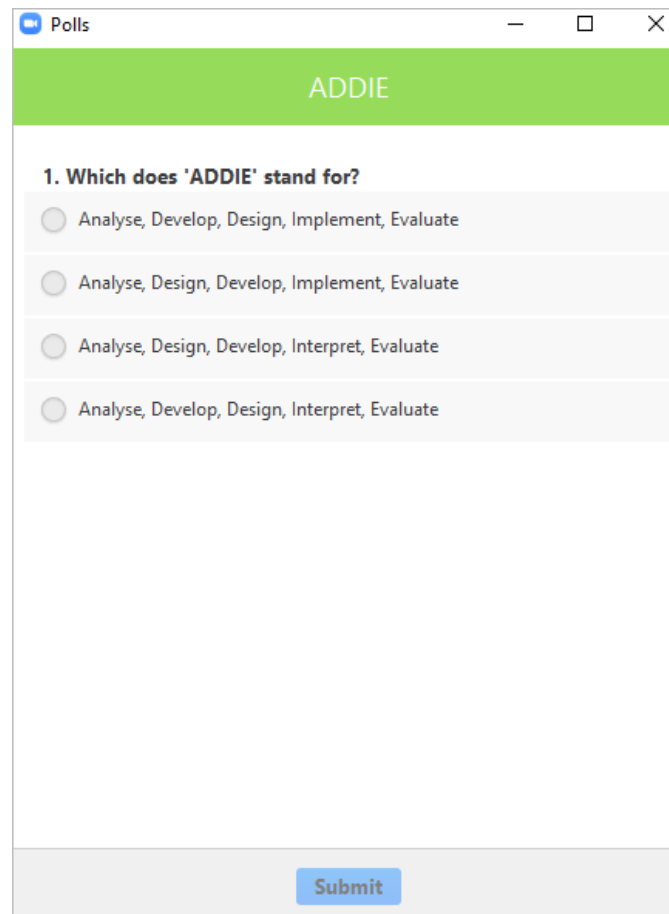
Step 3



- The main host will signal when everyone should return to the main room. Once in the main room, the host will start the meeting's poll.
- You will then select which approach you think is most appropriate for each design element.

Polling

- The main host will signal when everyone should return to the main room. Once in the main room, the host will start the meeting's poll for each design element.
- You will then select which approach you think is most appropriate for each design element.



The screenshot shows a web-based poll interface. At the top, there is a green header bar with the word "ADDIE" in white. Below the header, the question "1. Which does 'ADDIE' stand for?" is displayed. There are four radio button options listed below the question:

- ☐ Analyse, Develop, Design, Implement, Evaluate
- ☐ Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate
- ☐ Analyse, Design, Develop, Interpret, Evaluate
- ☐ Analyse, Develop, Design, Interpret, Evaluate

At the bottom of the form, there is a blue "Submit" button.

Open Q&A

- Please “Raise Hand” to ask your question.
- The facilitator will call your name and unmute you when it’s your turn.
- Participants on the phone will be unmuted at a certain point and have a chance to ask questions.

Desktop

Providing nonverbal feedback during meetings (participants)

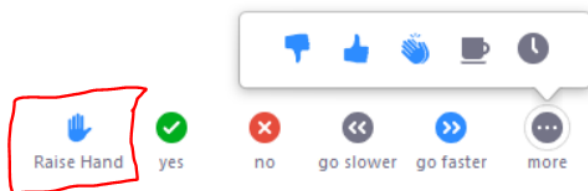
To provide nonverbal feedback to the host of the meeting:

1. Join a Zoom meeting as a participant.
2. Click the **Participants** button.



3. Click one of the icons to provide feedback to the host. Click the icon again to remove it.

Note: You can only have one icon active at a time.



IOS/Android

Providing Nonverbal Feedback During Meetings (Attendees)

To provide nonverbal feedback to the host of the meeting:

1. Join a Zoom meeting as a participant.
2. Click **More**.



3. Click one of the icons to provide feedback to the host. Click the icon again to remove it.

Note: You can only have one icon active at a time.

- raise hand

Next Steps

1. **Draft Residential Design Guidelines for Community Review - Early Fall 2020**
2. **Design Residential Guideline Comment Period and Workshop - Fall 2020**
3. **Final Residential Design Guidelines - November 2020**